

others need to realize our own dreams without destroying the planet.

It is about not being complacent. It is about getting on a new energy path. I believe an aggressive renewable electricity standard leads us down that path.

I urge all of my colleagues to support an aggressive standard. I suggest Minnesota's standard: 25 percent by 2025 for renewable electricity. It is a start down the path.

TRIBUTE TO FORMER CONGRESSMAN PARREN J. MITCHELL

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, today I rise to pay tribute to a fallen pillar of the movement to extend equal opportunity to thousands of African-American and minority businesses throughout our Nation: Congressman Parren J. Mitchell.

With the passing of former Congressman Mitchell on May 28, 2007, our country has lost one of its legendary advocates for minority business owners, a giant who knew that the struggle for civil rights and equal opportunity would be decided in America's board rooms as well as its voting booths and lunch counters.

Congressman Mitchell fought with heart, grit, integrity, and determination to level the playing field so more minority firms could do business with the Federal Government. He didn't just serve as chairman of the House Small Business Committee, he served as Congress's conscience. He also was founder and chairman of the Minority Business Enterprise Legal Defense and Education Fund.

Congressman Mitchell's life was an incredible story of courage and resolve. He became the first African-American graduate student at the University of Maryland when he challenged the university's policy of segregation. He was the first African American elected to Congress from the State of Maryland. He was the first African American elected to Congress who lived below the Mason-Dixon line since 1898. And he was the first African American to chair the House Small Business Committee.

Congressman Mitchell's work on that committee has left a legacy that is as long and impressive as his commitment to equal opportunity for all of our nation's citizens. Many of his policies made it possible for the rise of the minority business community. In 1976, he attached an amendment to a public works bill stipulating that cities and States receiving Federal grants had to award 10 percent of the money to minority-owned businesses. That year he also managed to pass a law requiring contractors to document their goals in contracting with minority-owned companies. In 1980, he was able to successfully amend the Surface Transportation Assistance Act to require 10 percent of the money to be set aside for minority businesses.

On May 22, 2007, in the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entre-

preneurship we held a hearing to look at the state of minority small businesses. And while the witnesses at the hearing revealed that there have been many gains for minority businesses, they also revealed that there is still more that needs to be done. I believe that the accomplishments of those who testified at the hearing would have made Congressman Mitchell proud. I also believe that the testimony about discriminatory practices that still confront minority businesses would have confirmed for him as it did for me that there are still more hills to climb.

The challenge now is to climb those hills by creating opportunities for minority businesses that will do justice to the memory of Congressman Mitchell. As we move forward in the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, the best way to do that is to pass laws that expand opportunities for all Americans who have been shut out or left behind.

VOTE EXPLANATIONS

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I regret that on May 24 I was unable to vote on the motion to concur in House amendment to Senate amendment to H.R. 2206, the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act of 2007. Regarding vote No. 181, I would have voted in favor of the motion to concur in House amendment to Senate amendment to H.R. 2206. My vote would not have altered the result of this motion.

Mr. President, I also regret that on May 24 I was unable to vote on certain provisions of S. 1348, the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007. I wish to address these votes so that the people of the great State of Kansas, who elected me to serve them as U.S. Senator, may know my position.

Regarding vote No. 176, on amendment No. 1186, I would have voted in favor of this amendment. My vote would not have altered the final result of this vote.

Regarding vote No. 177, on amendment No. 1158, I would have voted in favor of this amendment. My vote would not have altered the final result of this vote.

Regarding vote No. 178, on amendment No. 1181, I would not have voted in favor of this amendment. My vote would not have altered the final result of this vote.

Regarding vote No. 179, on amendment No. 1223, I would have voted in favor of this amendment. My vote would not have altered the final result of this vote.

Regarding vote No. 180, on amendment No. 1157, I would not have voted in favor of this amendment. My vote would not have altered the final result of this vote.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

FIRST LIEUTENANT KEITH NEAL HEIDTMAN

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, every Memorial Day, words fight a losing battle

against action. Each year, as spring warms into summer, we pause our lives and bow our heads in safety, and grope for words to honor the men and women who have made that safety possible. Inevitably, we fail; we say "fallen" when we mean "killed"; we say "sacrifice" for those who died unwillingly, in great pain. I believe we do so because we want to find a register for our voice to match the heroism of their work, but, also, because high words shield us from the immediacy of death in war. Even as we remember, we can't help looking away.

But some lack that luxury. They are in Iraq and Afghanistan, and they are living the war we speak about. For 10 American soldiers in Iraq, Memorial Day was their last day.

Last week, the Senate was out of session in commemoration of Memorial Day, but now that we have returned, I want to honor the memory of one of those 10 soldiers: Army 1LT. Keith Neil Heidtman. He was a native of Norwich and a graduate of the University of Connecticut. He was 24 years old. On Monday, May 28, the helicopter he was copiloting crashed, likely brought down by enemy fire. Early the next morning, an Army chaplain brought the news to Lieutenant Heidtman's family.

For Maureen and Arthur Robidoux, his mother and stepfather, for Kerry Heidtman, his father, for Chris Heidtman, his uncle, and for Keely Heidtman, his older sister, memories will never fill the place of the lives they loved. "If you had to pick your son, this is who you would pick," said Chris Heidtman. "He was handsome, he was bright". A star baseball player and a distinguished ROTC cadet, Lieutenant Heidtman volunteered for pilot training upon his graduation in 2005.

He learned the value of service from his parents, both public servants themselves: his mother at the State Department of Children and Families, and his father in a State child-support program. His death reminds us that the highest service carries the highest cost. "We're sending our finest, and we're losing them," said Lieutenant Heidtman's uncle.

So today we honor one of our finest, who wore our uniform and died long before his time. Next Memorial Day, his name will join the rolls of our dead. I pray that by then time will have soaked up his family's tears. Next spring, we will bow our heads and look for words to do him justice. I don't believe those words exist. His best memorial will be in our silence.

WAR CRIMES TRIAL

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, earlier this week in a special chamber of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, based in The Hague, proceedings began in the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who is accused of crimes against humanity, war crimes, and serious violations of international

law committed during Sierra Leone's 11-year civil war. Tens of thousands died in this conflict that ended in 2002, and more than a third of Sierra Leone's 6 million people were forced to flee. His trial is expected to have significant impact across Sierra Leone but also throughout neighboring countries as his raging brutality was in no way confined by national borders.

For over a decade, the people of Sierra Leone and Liberia not only suffered from deprivation and displacement at the hands of Charles Taylor, but they also endured forced recruitment of child soldiers, widespread and brutal sexual violence, and horrifying murders and mutilations. Those responsible for these crimes abandoned all human decency in their quest for power and wealth.

I have long been a strong supporter of accountability mechanisms around the world—and in particular Sierra Leone's Special Court and Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I have worked to ensure that the United States provides appropriate financial and political support for such important institutions, which are crucial to building a framework for the rule of law in postconflict countries. I commend the court for taking its mandate seriously and for following the evidence where it led—directly to a sitting head of state.

Despite Charles Taylor's unwillingness to appear at the opening of yesterday's trial, the message this critical trial sends—to current and would-be corrupt, violent, and brutal leaders—is momentous: the international community will no longer stand silently by but will support efforts to break the worst cycles of violence and impunity. When the trial continues later this month in The Hague, it is essential that international fair trial standards be adhered to, that robust and transparent outreach programs continue uninterrupted so the trial remains as accessible as possible to those most affected by the conflict and that great care is taken to ensure the security of victims, witnesses, and their families.

While I welcome the proceedings in The Hague, more needs to be done on behalf of the people of Sierra Leone and Liberia. True accountability for the horrific atrocities they endured will only be achieved when the rule of law is respected at every level in the governments of both countries and all citizens have access to justice. Great steps forward have been taken, but much more work remains. I will continue to press the United States and the international community not to desert the people of Sierra Leone—or the region—as they work to reconcile their grievances and seek to heal from one of Africa's worst conflicts.

CONQUER CHILDHOOD CANCER ACT

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I would like to take a few moments to talk about 8-year-old Jenessa Byers, known as "Boey" by her friends and family.

Last year, Boey was diagnosed with a very rare childhood cancer called rhabdomyosarcoma. Showing tremendous courage and strength as she underwent radiation and chemotherapy, Boey battled the cancer into remission. Unfortunately, that cancer returned and Boey is back in treatment undergoing radiation and chemotherapy once again.

While I was in Oregon over the recess, I had a chance to visit with Boey and her family at the Children's Cancer Center at Doernbecher Children's Hospital, as well as with other children at the hospital who are battling a variety of childhood cancers. Boey refers to herself as a warrior in the fight against cancer, and there is no doubt about it, Boey is a warrior. As I witnessed firsthand when I visited her last week, she is fighting the cancer as hard as she can. This in itself makes Boey a very brave and very special little girl.

But what makes her especially amazing is that in spite of what she is going through, Boey has been working tirelessly to help other children who are also battling cancer. Each month, she donates special bears and handmade cards titled "Be Strong" to other children at the hospital. The day before her eighth birthday last month, Boey participated as a survivor in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, for which she raised over \$500. In addition, she has raised money to help fight cancer on a local radiothon, and she has raised awareness using her own videos, which she has posted on YouTube.

Because of Boey's incredible compassion and determination to help the other children fighting cancer, she was recently asked to be a spokesperson for Doernbecher Children's Hospital. On May 31, she spoke about her experiences at a reception for the Children's Miracle Network. Just this past weekend, she was featured in a segment of the Doernbecher Children's Miracle Network Telethon.

While I was visiting Boey, she asked me to cosponsor the Conquer Childhood Cancer Act. Introduced by Senators REED and COLEMAN, this act would provide critical resources for the treatment, prevention, and cure of childhood cancer. The act would authorize \$150 million over a 5-year period to expand support for biomedical research programs of the existing National Cancer Institute-designated multicenter national infrastructure for pediatric cancer research. It would also establish a population-based national childhood cancer registry; enable researchers to more accurately study the incidence of childhood cancers and long-term effects of treatments; and provide funding for informational and educational services to families coping with a diagnosis of childhood cancer. The Conquer Childhood Cancer Act brings hope to the more than 12,500 children who are diagnosed with cancer each year, as well as more than 40,000 children and adolescents currently being treated for childhood cancers.

On behalf of Boey and the other courageous and wonderful children I met at Doernbecher Children's Hospital recently, and every child with cancer, I would like to announce that I am cosponsoring the Conquer Childhood Cancer Act. I will be working with my colleagues to get this bill signed into law so that we can find a cure for childhood cancer once and for all.

D-DAY ANNIVERSARY

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize the great sacrifices made by our Nation's veterans on the anniversary of D-day and to once again highlight the need for all of us to do more for those serving today.

On this day 63 years ago, 3,393 American troops gave their lives on the beaches of Normandy defending the freedom of America and its allies. These brave young men sacrificed themselves to stop an empire born of hatred from consuming Europe and fought to prove that freedom and justice would never bow to terror and intolerance. Their valor and service will forever endure in our Nation's memory.

Today, a new generation faces new challenges. The nearly 170,000 American troops currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan exemplify the kind of courage and dedication that has defined the American military throughout our history. And for the sacrifices they are willing to make, we in the Senate, our colleagues in the House, the military leadership, the President, and the American people have an absolute moral obligation to provide our servicemen and women with the best possible protection when we send them to war.

I know that when President Roosevelt sent his men into battle, he did not simply pay lip service to their courage, he made sure that they had the strongest artillery, the best gear, and the most advanced equipment available. He did not worry that the landing craft he needed for D-day would not be needed when the war ended. He made equipping the force the entire Nation's top priority. Calling on the patriotism of American businessmen to ensure military needs were met before all else. And so I ask why—a half century later—we cannot do the same for our troops today.

Today, improvised explosive devices, IEDs, are the single greatest threat to the lives of our troops, causing 70 percent of U.S. casualties in Iraq. The military has indicated that mine-resistant ambush protected, MRAP, vehicles, which provide four to five times more protection than up-armored Humvees, will reduce casualties from IEDs by two-thirds. These vehicles have already been tested fully at Aberdeen Proving Center and our allies have been using similar technologies in the field for years.

So why, then, are these critical vehicles not already in the field?